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ABSTRACT

This paper provides teachers with 35 techniques for promoting preschool children's prosocial development. Research findings that support many of the techniques are cited. Some of the techniques refer to caregivers' personal interactions with individual children or groups, while others target broader systems and require involvement of families, schools, and communities. The techniques include: modeling prosocial behaviors; using positive discipline strategies; providing alternatives to aggressive behavior; helping children become assertive; arranging regular viewing of prosocial media and videogames; using Socratic questioning methods; teaching cooperative games and conflict-resolution games; providing relaxation and focused imagination activities; pairing isolated children with sociable children; using children's literature to enhance empathy and caring; giving children responsibility in the classroom; facilitating cooperation rather than competition in school learning plans; arranging classroom spaces and play materials to facilitate cooperative play; developing projects that involve altruism; emphasizing to families that prosocial interactions are an integral curriculum component and a goal of the child care facility; and becoming familiar with structured curriculum packages designed to promote prosocial development. Appended are 88 references. (GLR)

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Helping Children Become More Prosocial: Tips for Teachers[1]

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Teachers working in child care settings have emphasized cognitive aspects of curriculum more than affective aspects. That is, they are far more likely to teach and promote classification and seriation, uses of materials, and pre-reading skills than they are to teach children how to be cooperative, kind and caring. Indeed, Piaget's theoretical explanation of the inability of the preoperational child (prior to age 7 or 8 years) to "decenter" and take the point of view of another, may have contributed to a belief by teachers of preschoolers that a prosocial curriculum would not be adaptable to the cognitive abilities of young children.

However, some of the recent data on long term effects of full-time childcare in infancy have raised concerns about possible heightened aggression and lack of prosocial interactions among preschoolers who have been in full-time infancy non-parental care during the first year of life (Belsky & Rovine, 1988).

Preschoolers who have experienced stable high quality child care in infancy have been rated as socially effective, although their teachers rated those who had had full-time early infancy care as more aggressive in peer interactions (Field, Masi, Goldstein, Perry, and Parl, 1988). Middle-class preschoolers who had been in full-time child care prior to 9 to 12 months were rated by teachers(who had known them for at least one year, but who knew nothing about their infant care history) as more unhappy, disobedient, aggressive, lying, fighting and destructive compared with preschoolers who had not had full time non-parental care during the first three years of life (Park & Honig, 1991). However, the teachers also rated these preschoolers as more advanced in abstract reasoning and problem solving compared to children who had no full-time nonparental care during infancy.

Thus a puzzlement is presented to planners of enrichment experiences: how can personnel preserve the cognitive advantages of high-quality programs for young children in the earliest years, and yet prevent antisocial effects which some researchers have found? Vigorous promotion of prosocial curricula in child care facilities, just as cognitive curricula have been effectively promoted, is here proposed as an aid to prevent these problems.

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Such a proposal is supported by research evidence (Honig, 1982). Children who attended the Abecedarian program full-time from early infancy onward, acted fifteen times as aggressively in kindergarten in comparison with control youngsters who had not attended this high-quality child care program (Haskins, 1985). But when a prosocial curriculum entitled "My Friends and Me" was implemented, then the next groups of child care graduates did not differ in aggression rates from control children. Thus, it is highly likely that if caregivers and teachers are provided with research findings, ideas, techniques, and reading materials to help them implement a prosocial curriculum, then rates of aggression can be decreased and rates of prosocial interactions increased.

In Honig & Wittmer's (1992) annotated bibliography on prosocial researches and applications, many ideas are explicitly presented that can be helpful in teacher practice. Other techniques are implied from research results that correlate certain characteristics of children and their environments with increases in prosocial behavior. The development of child characteristics such as positive self-esteem, assertiveness, and the ability to take the role of others as well as teacher/parent interaction styles and classroom climate: <u>all</u> are important in helping children become more prosocial.

Below we present thirty-five techniques for teachers and parents, schools and communities, to promote young children's prosocial development. Wherever possible, we cite supportive research findings to back up the techniques suggested. Some of the suggestions refer to <u>personal</u> interactions of caregivers with individual children or groups of young children. Other techniques target broader systems, and will require involvement of families, schools, and communities in boosting awareness of and skills in promoting children's prosocial development.

A. <u>Personal Techniques for Caregivers with Children</u>

1. <u>Model prosocial behaviors.</u>

Adults who model prosocial behaviors influence children's willingness to behave prosocially (Bandura, 1986). Bryan (1977) stresses that children will imitate the helping activities of models whether whose models are alive and present or televised and absent. Modeling has proved more powerful than preaching. How teachers and parents act - kind, patient, considerate, generous, helpful, empathic, nurturing, caring, compassionate, and concerned - will influence young children to imitate them. Children who frequently observe and feel the impact of family members and teachers who behave prosocially will imitate those special adults.

2. Label and identify prosocial and antisocial behaviors.

When adults label behaviors, as, "inconsiderate to others", "aggravating others", "considerate toward peers", and "cooperative with classmates", then children's dialogues and role-taking abilities are increased (Vorrath, 1985). Be specific in identifying varieties of prosocial behaviors and actions for children.

3. Use positive discipline strategies, such as induction and authoritative methods.

Positive discipline techniques such as reasoning, use of positive reinforcement, empathic listening, and Baumrind's (1977) authoritative parenting (loving, positive commitment to the child plus use of firm, clear rules and explanations) are associated with children's prosocial behavior. Children's level of reasoning is related to nonauthoritarian, nonpunitive maternal practices (Eisenberg, Lennon, & Roth, 1983). The more nonauthoritarian and nonpunitive the parent, the higher the child's levels of reasoning. Discipline that is emotionally intense but nonpunitive, is effective with toddlers (Yarrow, & Waxler, 1976).

Positive discipline: A protection against media violence. An interaction has been found between parents' positive discipline techniques and the effects of prosocial and antisocial television programs on children. Using Hoffman's terms to describe parenting styles, Abelman (1986) reported that parents who are most inductive (use reasoning) and who very rarely use love withdrawal or power assertion, have children who are most affected by prosocial television and least affected by antisocial fare. The reverse is also true.

Positive discipline, then, is a powerful buffer that contributes to children not being as negatively affected by antisocial media materials as are children who are exposed to negative discipline techniques.

4. Acknowledge children's feelings; Encourage understanding and expression of own and others' feelings.

Empathy with a peer who is experiencing sadness, anger, or distress may depend on a child having a prior personal similar experience with those feelings (Barnett, 1984). Children from ages three to eight are becoming aware of happy feelings (3 1/2 years), fear (3 1/2 to four years) and anger and sadness (least consistent age trends (Borke, 1971). Caregivers need to help children put feelings into words, and encourage children to understand their own and others' feelings. Acknowledge and reflect the feelings of children by making comments such as, "It seems as if you are feeling so sad or "It makes you feel angry when someone doesn't play fair."

Meadow & Larabee (1982) used a feeling wheel with eight to nine-year-old children with hearing impairments. The wheel, divided into 16 feeling segments, helps children discuss how and why they are feeling a certain way, and also helps them understand other peoples' emotions.

5. Value and emphasize consideration for others' needs.

Children become aware very early of what aspects of life their special adults admire and value. When parents value their child having concern for others and they also press for consideration of others, then toddlers (Yarrow & Waxler, 1976) and learning disabled boys (Elardo & Freund, 1981) behave more prosocially. Concerned preaching or moral exhortation, emphasizing the importance of children helping others whenever possible, resulted in children undertaking more activities to help (Grusec,Saas-Kortsaak & Simultis, 1978). Parents who esteem altruism highly have children who are more frequently nominated by peers as highly prosocial (Rutherford & Mussen, 1968).

6. Facilitate perspective and role-taking skills: Act out stories.

Both a child's ability to identify accurately the emotional state of another as well as the empathic ability to experience the feelings of another contribute to prosocial behavior. Altruistic children display more empathy and perspective-taking skills (a cognitive measure). When 16 girls (ages 10 to 16) were trained through role-playing to enhance their perspective-taking skills, referential communication and empathy scores increased for the group of girls in the training program, but not for a control group of girls who had been in a physical fitness training program (Chalmers, & Townsend, 1990).

Role-playing helps children gain insights into the viewpoints of others. Iannotti (1978) engaged six-and nine-year-old boys in role-playing and role-switching experiences. In the first group, each boy assumed the perspective of one of the characters in a story. In the role-switching group, boys took on the perspective of each of the different characters by switching roles every five minutes. Six-year-olds with role-taking training donated more candy to the poor than controls, and the most sharing was seen for the six-year-old boys who had switched roles.

Emphasize how all children and persons feel better and get a fairer chance when others treat them courteously and kindly. Children who feel that others are more rather than less similar to themselves behave more prosocially toward them. Feshbach (1975) reported that her two training techniques that promoted empathy in children were role-playing and maximizing the perceived similarity between the observer and the stimulus person.

Encourage dramatic acting-out of stories. Children who act out different stories become aware of how the characters feel. Switching roles gives children a different perspective on the feelings and motives of each different character. Acting out roles, as in Billy Goats Gruff or Goldilocks and the Three Bears, gave children a chance to understand each story character's point of view (Krogh & Lamm, 1983). The class can end up writing a letter of apology from "Goldilocks" to the Bear family!

Perspective-taking alone is not enough. Children who are low in empathy, but high in perspective- taking may demonstrate Machiavellianism (a tendency to take advantage in a negative way of their knowledge concerning another person's feelings and thoughts) (Barnett & Thompson, 1985).

7. Respond to and provide alternatives to aggressive behaviors.

Caldwell (1977) advises caregivers not to ignore aggression or permit aggression to be expressed and assume that this will "discharge the tension". For example, bullying that is ignored does not disappear. Caldwell advises, "In order to control aggression, we must strengthen altruism". Teach children what they can do to help others feel good.

Re-direct antisocial actions to more acceptable actions. A child who is throwing a ball at another may be redirected to throw a bean-bag back and forth with another child .

Teach angry, acting-out children to use words to express feelings. When children are feeling aggrieved, teach them: "Use your words" instead of hurtful actions. Help children learn "I - statements" to express their feelings and wishes and express how they perceive a distress/conflict situation (Gordon, 1970).

Give children words and phrases to use, such as "I feel upset when our game is interrupted! "I cannot finish my building if you take away these blocks", or "I was using that magic marker first. I still need it to finish my picture".

8. Videotape children who are behaving prosocially to facilitate sharing.

The role-taking abilities of boys (ages 11-13) showed significant improvement particiation in after an experimental training program where they videotaped themselves and others. Delinquencies among the boys were reduced by one-half (Chandler, 1973). Third-grade children viewed videotapes of themselves and models in situations involving sharing. This technique was effective in increasing sharing immediately following training and one week later (Devoe & Sherman, 1978).

9. Actively lead group discussions on sharing.

When preschool children were given explanations as to why sharing was important and how to share, then sharing increased (Barton & Osborne, 1978). When teachers set aside classroom time daily for a month to encourage children to discuss specific incidents relating how they and their classmates were being helpful/kind with one another, then later on prosocial interactions increased about two-fold among these second-graders compared with control children (Honig & Pollack, 1990).

Set up group discussions to increase children's awareness of distributive justice- how goods and benefits are distributed. For example, at meal times in a child care center, rigid equality in distributing food is not the best plan if one child is very hungry and not well-fed at home. More than other children, a child with a disability may need help from classmates and teacher or extra time to finish a project. Through discussions, children can move from a position of belief in strict equality in distribution of treats or toys, toward awareness of concepts of equity and benevolence, where the special needs of others are taken into account (Damon, 1977).

Children will need to talk about and struggle with a new idea: strict equal apportionment according to work done may not be the kindest or most prosocial decision in special cases. If a child with cerebral palsy and marked difficulties in hand coordination has finished far fewer placemats in a class project for a school crafts sale, she or he has tried just as hard as the others. That child should receive the same share of any "profits" from the class craft sale as others.

10. Help children become assertive and less timid concerning prosocial matters.

Barrett & Yarrow (1977) have noted that if a child has high perspective-taking skills and is assertive, then the child is more likely to be prosocial. In contrast, if a child has high-perspective taking skills and is timid, then the child is less likely to be prosocial.

11. Arrange regular viewing of prosocial media and videogames.

Prosocial videos and television programs increase children's social contacts as well as smiling, praising, and hugging (Coates, B., Pusser & Goodman,1976), children's sharing, cooperating, turn-taking, and positive verbal/physical contact (Forge & Phemister, 1987), and children's willingness to help puppies (Poulds, Rubinstein & Leibert, 1975). Regular viewing of prosocial television, particularly Mr.Rogers' neighborhood, has resulted in higher levels of task persistence, rule obedience, and tolerance of delay of gratification. Children from low socioeconomic families who watched this program daily showed increased cooperative play, nurturance, and verbalization of feelings (Friedrich & Stein, 1973). In contrast, children who were exposed to aggressive videogames donated less to needy children than those children who played prosocial videogames by themselves (Chambers, 1987).

12. Use Socratic questions to elicit prosocial planfulness and recognition of responsibility.

When a child is misbehaving in such a way as to disturb his own or class progress, quietly ask, "How does that help you?" This technique, recommended by Fugitt (1983), can be expanded to encourage group awareness by asking the child, "How is that helping the group?" or "How is that helping your neighbor?" This strategy is designed to help children recognize and take responsibility for their own behaviors.

13. Teach cooperative and conflict-resolution games/sports.

Conflict resolution games help keep peace in the classroom (Kreidler, 1984). New games and variations of traditional children's games and sports that encourage cooperation rather than competition facilitate prosocial interactions (Orlick, 1982, 1985; Prutzman, Sgern, Berger, & Boderhamer, 1988). Musical chairs can be played so that each time a chair is taken away , the "left-over" child must find a lap to sit on rather than be out of the game.

Bos (1990), provides examples of such games. In "Spider swing" one child, with legs hanging out the back of the swing, sits on the lap of another. She calls games where children play cooperatively together to create pleasure and fun "coaction".

14. Provide body relaxation and focused imagination activities.

Create a relaxed classroom climate to further harmonious interactions. Relaxation exercises can restore harmony when children are fussy or tense. Back rubs help. Sand play and water play promote bodily relaxation in some children who have a difficult time acting peaceably.

Focused imagery activities can reduce tensions. Have children close their eyes and imagine being in a quiet forest glade listening to a stream flow nearby and feeling the warm sunshine on their faces. When children lie down on mats and wiggle each limb separately, in turn, they can relax and ease body tensions. Many classical music pieces, such as the Brahms Lullaby or Debussy's Reverie, can be useful in helping children imagine peaceful scenes.

Group movement to music adds another dimension of relaxation. Dancing partners need to tune into each others' motions and rhythmic swaying as they hold hands or take turns imitating each other's gestures.

15. Attribute positive social behaviors to each child.

Attributing positive intentions, "You shared because you like to help others" or "You're the kind of person who likes to help others whenever you can" resulted in children donating more generously to needy others (Grusec, Kuczynski, Rushton, P. & Simultis, 1978; Grusec & Redler, 1980).

A teacher needs to personalize attributions. Say: "You are the kind of person who likes to stick up for a kid who is being bothered". "You are the kind of child who really tries to be a buddy to a new child in our class who is shy at first in finding a friend".

16. Show pictured scenes of altruism and ask children to create verbal scenarios.

Show children pictured scenes of children being helpful, cooperative, generous, charitable, patient, courteous, sharing, and kind. Working with a small group of children, call on each child to make up a scenario or story about the child or children in the picture. Ask: "What do you think is happening here?" Be sure to assist children to become aware of how the helpee feels, and how the child who has been helpful or generous will feel about herself or himself.

17. Provide specific behavioral training in social skills.

Cartledge & Milburn, (1980) recommend defining skills to be taught in behavioral terms assessing children's level of competence. Then teach the skills lacking, evaluate the results of teaching, and provide opportunities for practice and generalization of transfer of new social skills to new situations.

Goldstein (1989) uses structured learning therapy to teach prosocial skills such as negotiation, self-relaxation, and anger-control with adolescents. Preschool children who were given

training and encouraged to (1) use politeness words (2) listen to who is talking, (3) participate with a peer in an activity, (4) share, (5) take turns, and (6) help another person have fun, were more sociable in the specific training classroom and at follow-up (Factor & Schilmoeller, 1983).

18. Encourage "means-ends" and alternative-solution thinking in conflict situations.

Help children think through step-by-step their reasoning about how to respond when they are having a social problem with a peer. What are the steps by which they figure out how to get from the conflict situation they are in to peaceful, friendly cooperation or a more courteous live-and-let-live situation they would like to achieve? Shure & Spivack (1978) provide daily lessons for teachers to help children discover when their feelings and wishes are the same or different from other children's, or whether some or all of the children want to play the game one prefers. Teachers who used these daily lesson plans with a particular emphasis on encouraging children to think of alternative solutions to their social conflicts and to imagine the consequences of each behavior or strategy they think of, helped aggressive and shy children become more positively social within three months. The number, not the quality of the children's social solutions, was correlated with children's increased positive social functioning.

19. Identify and use children's personal strengths and interests.

Adcock & Segal (1983) describe a child who was having difficulty in social relations. When an activity that he loved, such as water play, was identified, then he behaved more prosocially in order to continue participating in that activity.

20. Pair "social isolates" with sociable children.

Place a child who is experiencing social problems with a friendly, socially- skilled playmate, particularly a younger one, to increase the "social isolate's" positive peer interactions (Furman, Rahe & Hartup, 1978). Pair an assertive, gregarious gentle child (who receives lots of prosocial overtures and is more likely to offer help and friendliness) with a very shy child.

21. Create puppet playlets to facilitate children's learning of prosocial behaviors.

Trovato (1987) created the puppets, "Hattie Helper", "Carl Defender", "Robert Rescuer", Debra Defender", "Kevin Comforter", and "Sharon Sharer" for adults to use to help young children learn prosocial behaviors with other children. Crary (1984) promotes the use of puppets for teachers and children to use in

role-playing different social situations that may arise in the classroom.

22. Use bibliotherapy: Incorporate children's literature to enhance empathy and caring in daily reading activities.

Many publishers, such as the Albert Whitman Company, provide excellent books for adults to read to young children to help them cope with and find adaptive solutions for disturbing concerns such as a yelling parent, parental divorce, or scared feelings. Choose children's literature for prosocial themes and characters who provide altruistic models. "Duck and bear are friends" is the charming story of how two friends - one of whom was messy but a fine cook, the other of whom could keep everything tidy but couldn't cook well - helped each other lovingly and generously. Dr. Seuss's Horton the Elephant is that kind of prosocial character, in the books "Horton hears a who" and Horton hatches an egg". So is the king's young page boy in Seuss's "The king's stilts". So is the little engine who could, as she chugs courageously up and over a very tall mountain to bring toys to boys and girls.

McMath (1989) provides ways to use open-ended questions that help children think about and understand the motives and actions of story-book characters. Teachers who read such stories, often about animals or children, promote children's ability to grasp socioemotional motivations and motivate children to imitate more empathic and helpful responses (Dreikurs, Grunwald, & Pepper, 1982).

23. Use victim-centered discipline and reparation: Emphasize consequences.

Other-oriented techniques focus a child on the effects of hurtful and antisocial behaviors, such as hitting or pinching. Point out the consequences of the child's behavior.Emphasize to the aggressor the results of hurtful actions upon another person. Say: " Look. That hurt him!. He is crying. His skin is all red. I need to protect the children in my class. I cannot let you hurt another child, and I do not want anyone to make you hurt. We need to help each other feel happy and safe in this class. What can you say that will help X feel better?" Parents of toddlers who were most prosocial emphasized the negative consequences of their toddlers' aggressive acts on other children (Pines, 1979).

In Yarrow & Waxler's (1976) research, an adult modelled helpfulness with three-dimensional diorama figures. The model always emphasized how her actions were helpful to the figure in the diorama. For example, she took a paper banana down from a diorama construction-paper tree and told the little toy monkey on the ground of the diorama scene that she wanted to help him by reaching down the banana for him.

24. Require responsibility: Encourage children to care for younger siblings and children who need extra help with their learning.

Anthropologists, studying six different cultures, noted that when children helped care for younger siblings and interacted with a cross-age variety of children in social groups in nonschool settings, they felt more responsible for the welfare of the group, and they gained more skills in nurturing (Whiting & Whiting, 1975).

Give children responsibility, commensurate with their abilities, to care for and help teach younger children or children who may need extra personal help in the classroom. Children who carried out such caring actions of required helpfulness, in a long term study of at-risk infants born on the island of Kuaii, were more likely 32 years later to be positively socially functioning as family members and as citizens (Werner, 1986).

25. Notice and positively encourage prosocial behaviors, but do not overuse external rewards.

Social reinforcement for sharing has increased sharing among young children even when the experimenter was no longer present (Rushton & Teachman, 1978). Goffin (1987) recommends that teachers notice when children share mutual goals, ideas, and materials, as well as when they negotiate and bargain in decision making and accomplishing goals. When teachers and parents use external reinforcement too much, however, prosocial behaviors may decrease. Fabes, Fultz, Eisenberg, May-Plumlee & Chistopher, (1989) reported that mothers who have positive feelings about using rewards may undermine their children's internalized desire to behave prosocially by increasing the salience of external rather than internal rewards.

B. Ideas for Systems, such as families, schools, and communities

26. Provide child-centered ,high-quality care in preschool and kindergarten classrooms.

Set up a developmentally appropriate classroom. Four-year-olds in a constructivist classroom were given many opportunities for autonomous construction of attitudes, principles, and social problem-solving strategies. Social-cognitive competence was higher among children in the constructivist classroom compared to the comparison preschool (Devries & Goncu, 1990).

Children in adult-directed preschool classrooms engage in less prosocial behavior than children in classrooms that encourage more child-initiated learnings and interactions (Huston-Stein, Friedrich-Cofer, & Susman, 1977). In a longitudinal study of children at age 19 who had attended either a high adult-directed preschool versus a high child-initiated preschool, the latter were more socially competent and had fewer juvenile delinquency convictions at age 19 (Schweinhart, Weikart & Larner, 1986).

27. Facilitate cooperation rather than competition in school learning plans.

A competitive classroom can result in a child fearing failure. In a cooperative interaction classroom, the emphasis is on children working together to accomplish mutual goals (Aronson, Bridgeman, & Geffner, 1978). In cooperative classrooms, children learn that every child has an essential and unique contribution to make. One technique has been called the "jigsaw technique" because each child is provided with one piece of information about a lesson and then the children must work cooperatively in groups to learn all the material and information necessary for a complete presentation (Aronson, Stephan, Sikes, Blaney & Snapp, 1978).

28. Arrange classroom spaces and play materials to facilitate cooperative play.

Arrangements of space, and the types of toys and learning materials that teachers provide, affect prosocial behavior. Large muscle toys, such as a group see-saw or tire-bouncer or nylon parachute encourage cooperation in making the equipment enjoyable for all the participating children. Toddlers who each grasp the opposite ends of a towel can keep a ball bouncing on the towel by coordinating their efforts together.

More prosocial responses were given by young children attending day care or nursery school programs when (1) a variety of age-appropriate materials were available and (2) space was arranged to accommodate groups of varying sizes (Holloway & Reichhart-Erickson, 1988). Rogers (1987) noted that children who played with large hollow and unit blocks in a large block area of their preschool participated in more prosocial than aggressive behaviors. Children learned and practiced positive social problem-solving skills in the large block area. Yet, where preschoolers are crowded together in a narrow area with large blocks, the pressure to use the blocks as missiles or pretend guns may be greater.

29. Develop school and class projects that practice altruism.

Children may need adult help and suggestions for group altruism projects. The class can prominently label and display a jar in which they put pennies to donate to hungry children or, for example, to the families in the New York Times Neediest campaign at holiday time. When the jar is full, the children can count out how much money they are contributing and compose a joint class letter to the organization to which they are contributing. Other class projects can arise during group discussion times about troubles that far-away or nearby children are having. Prosocial projects can include: school-yard clean-ups, writing as pen pals to children in far away lands, collecting toys or food for poor persons, and making friends with older people during visits to a home for the aged.

Focus some group projects on children's ideas for cooperation and helping out in one's own family. Each child can draw "Helping Coupons" and create a gift book with large, hand-drawn coupons. Each coupon promises a helpful act to a parent or family member. Encourage children to work out their own coupon books for helping out and showing kindness in their families. Some of the coupons could be :" "drying the dishes"; "reading my baby brother a story"; "setting the table", "sharing my toy cars with my sister", and "getting my teeth brushed all by myself after bath time when papa is putting baby brother to bed". Very young children can dictate the helpful offers; teachers can then print each offer on a coupon. Children illustrate their coupons with signs and pictures that remind them of what sharing or generous action their coupon represents. Children cut out the coupons and generously give them to family members as personal gifts - promises of help.

Damon(1988) urges that teachers actively recruit and involve moral mentors in the classroom. Invite community persons who have contributed altruistically to better the lives of others to come in and talk about their lives and experiences. Children may nominate someone in their own family to come and talk about how they help others. Perhaps Aunt Esther goes and fixes the ladies' hair and livens up their days in a nursing home for the elderly. Perhaps Uncle Irving fitted up the family station wagon with a ramp so he can take people in wheel chairs to the ball game on a weekend as his way of helping others.

30. Emphasize to families that prosocial interactions are an integral curriculum component and goal of your child care facility.

Be sure to share your emphasis on prosocial classroom activities and goals with parents. You may find it useful to remind parents that children's ability to act empathically depends a lot on parents' empathic behaviors (Barnett, Howard,

King, & Dino, 1980). In interviews ten years after graduation from a program that emphasized caring and prosocial development for the families as well as their infants and preschoolers in group care, teenagers and their families who had participated earlier reported that they felt more family support, closeness, and appreciation and had far fewer episodes of juvenile delinquency compared with control youngsters (Lally, Mangione, & Honig ,1988).

Some parents will appreciate a library of prosocial articles in your child care facility. For example, make available a copy of Kobak's (1979) brief article on how she embeds caring and awareness of positive social interactions in all classroom activities, dialogues, and projects. Her concept of a "Caring Quotient " (CQ) classroom emphasizes how important it is that children learn positive social interaction skills as well as intellectual skills (IQ). Social problem-solving by a class must take into consideration that the child whose problem is being brainstormed has to feel that the class cares about him or her as they explore ways to resolve a problem (such as a chronic truancy, or a book borrowed from a teacher and never returned).

Finkelstein (1982) reported that children who had attended a high quality research child care program that emphasized cognitive development were more aggressive when they entered kindergarten than a control group of children who had not been in child care or who had attended community child care. When a prosocial curriculum was instituted for future waves of children in the program,then this difference disappeared in later evaluations.

Help families recognize and choose high quality care that provides continuity of care for young children. Howes & Stewart, 1987) discovered that families who were the most stressed chose the lowest quality child care arrangements, were the most likely to change arrangements, and had children with the lowest levels of competence during social play with peers. Children who had experienced high quality child care and supportive parents had acquired the ability to decode and regulate emotional signals in peer play. Children who stayed in the same child care center with the same peer group increased their proportion of complementary and reciprocal peer play, more than did children who changed peer groups although they stayed in the same child care center (Howes, 1987). Continuity of child care and continuity of peer group are important in the development of a child's social competence. Staff competency and their years of experience are significant factors. Park & Honig (1991) found that the more highly trained and stable the preschool staff were, the lower were teacher-rated and observed preschool aggression scores, despite varying histories of infant care among the children.

Encourage cooperative classroom activities, such as drawing a group mural, building a large boat with blocks, planning a puppet show, or sewing a yarn picture with children using different large yarn needles on either side of the stretched burlap where the outlined picture is being embroidered.

31. Become familiar with structured curriculum packages designed to promote prosocial development.

Complete program packages are available with materials and ideas for enhancing prosocial behaviors in the classroom. Communicating to make friends (Fox, 1980) provides 18 weeks of planned activities to promote peer acceptance. The Dinkmeyer and Dinkmeyer (1982), Developing Understanding of Self and Others (Rev. DUSO-R), provides puppets, activity cards, charts, and audio cassettes to promote children's awareness of others' feelings and social skills. The Abecedarian program instituted My friends and me (Davis, 1977) and thereby promoted more prosocial development among participants.

Arrange Bessell and Palomares' (1973)Magic Circle lessons so that children, during a safe, non-judgmental circle time, feel secure enough to share feelings and memories of times they have had social problems and when they have been helped by others and have been thoughtful and caring on behalf of others.

32. Try friendship-building strategies to encourage social interaction of children with special needs with typical children in integrated settings.

Teachers must often take the initiative when an integrated classroom presents problems of low-level or even non-existent prosocial skills among some children. Caregivers need to take responsibility when necessary for specific help in facilitating friendships. Activities to promote friendship are available from Edwards (1986), Fox (1980), Smith (1982), and Wolf (1986). Children with disabilities will urgently need your initiatives in learning how to make a friend, use positive and assertive techniques to enter a play group, and sustain friendly play bouts with peers. Promotion of specific friendship skills to enhance the social integration of typical children with children who have disabilities requires well-planned teacher strategies, because prosocial interactions of children with disabilities sometimes occur naturally at very low levels (Gresham, 1981; Guralnick, 1990; Honig & McCarron, 1990).

33. Implement a comprehensive school-based program.

Brown & Solomon, (1983) have translated prosocial research for application in elementary schools. They created a comprehensive program in several schools in the Bay Area in California to increase prosocial attitudes and behavior among the

children and their families:

a. Children from about age 6 onward, with adult supervision, take responsibility for caring for younger children
b. "Cooperative learning" requires that children work with each other learning in groups or teams of children within classes.
c. Children are involved in structured programs of helpful activities that will be useful, such as visiting shut-ins, making toys for others, visiting the elderly, cleaning up or gardening in nearby parks and playgrounds.
d. Children of mixed ages engage in activities.
e. Children help with home chores on a regular basis with parental approval and cooperation.
f. Children regularly role-play situations where persons are in need of help in order to experience feelings of "victim" and "helper".
g. The entire elementary school recognizes and rewards caring, helping, responsibility, and other prosocial behaviors whether they occur at home or at school.
h. The children learn about adult models who are prosocial in films, television, and their own community. The children watch for such models in the news and clip newspaper articles; they invite such models to tell their stories in class.
i. Empathy training includes children's exposure to examples of animals or children in distress, in real life, or in staged episodes so that they can hear adults comment on how to help someone in trouble and they get to watch examples of helping behaviors.
j. Continuity and total saturation in a school program create a climate, in the demonstration schools and families, that communicates prosocial expectations and supports children's learning and enacting prosocial behaviors.

34. Train children as peer mediators in schools.

In some New York City schools, the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP) trains fifth graders as peer mediators to move to situations of social conflict, such as a playground fight, and help the children resolve their problems. RCCP rules mandate that each child in a conflict be given a chance by the peer mediators to describe and explain the problem from her or his viewpoint and try to agree on how to settle the problem. The peer mediators are trained in nonviolent and creative ways of dealing with peer conflicts (RCCP: 163 Third Avenue # 239, New York, NY 10003).

35. Cherish the children: Create an atmosphere of affirmation of each individual child through family/classroom/community rituals.

A warm smile, an arm around the shoulder, let a child know he or she is valued and cared for. Encourage children to tell something special about their relationship to a particular child on that child's birthday. Write down these "birthday stories " into a special book for each child. An attitude of affirmation creates an environment where children feel safe, secure, accepted, and loved (Salkowski, 1991). Special holiday celebration times, such as Thanksgiving, Abraham Lincoln's birthday, Father's Day, or Mother's Day, offer particularly appropriate occasions to create ritual activities in class and to illustrate ceremonies and appropriate behaviors for expressing caring and thankfulness.

College students who scored high on an empathy scale remembered their parents as having been more empathic and affectionate when they were younger (Barnett, Howard, King, & Dino, 1980). Egeland & Sroufe (1981), in a series of longitudinal researches, reported devastating effects of lack of early family cherishing of infants and young children. The more cherished is a child, the less likely he or she is to bully others or be rejected by other children. The more nurturing parents and caregivers are, the more positive affection and responsive, empathic care they provide, the more positively and cooperatively children will relate in social interactions with teachers, caring adults, and peers.

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